United Nations A/64/726

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 March 2010
English
Original: French

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 111 (h)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 18 March 2010 from the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to inform him that Switzerland has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council at the elections to be held during the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly on 13 May 2010.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, Switzerland has prepared a document indicating the efforts that it has made in order to promote human rights as well as the voluntary pledges and commitments that it plans to undertake.

Switzerland would be grateful if the Secretary-General would arrange for this note and its annex to be circulated as a document of the United Nations (see annex).

10-29024 (E) 260310 290310

Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 18 March 2010 from the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251

Switzerland is presenting its candidature for a second term on the Human Rights Council for the period 2010-2013. During its first term, Switzerland was fully committed, together with all other members, observers and non-governmental organizations, to ensuring that the Human Rights Council should become a strong and effective institution. It also launched initiatives individually or with partners from other regional groups in the fields of human rights education and transitional justice. It worked to ensure that the Council could deal appropriately with human rights situations in all the countries of the world. It also volunteered to be among the first countries to be examined in the framework of the universal periodic review. Since then, it has striven to carry out, in partnership with its civil society, the recommendations made to it. Lastly, Switzerland has carried out a major part of the pledges and commitments that it had made in accordance with resolution 60/251.

Switzerland, the host State of the Human Rights Council, is fully committed to the promotion of human rights, which is a priority of its foreign policy. It therefore believes that it can contribute in an inclusive and open manner to the strengthening of the Human Rights Council to enable it to fulfil all its potential as the leading human rights body of the United Nations for the benefit of the women, men and children in each of our countries, paying particular attention to victims and vulnerable groups.

With this goal in mind, Switzerland presents the following voluntary pledges and commitments.

The Swiss Government pledges to:

1. Continue to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council in order to make it a strong, effective and equitable United Nations body for the promotion and protection of human rights by

- Helping to ensure that this institution based in Geneva can fulfil its mandate under the best possible conditions;
- Actively participating in the work of the Council in a spirit of cooperation, inclusion and authentic dialogue with its partners from all regions in order to work to implement civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;
- Contributing to the ongoing reflection on the review of the work and functioning of the Council in order to strengthen its capacities after an initial period of five years;
- Undertaking the commitment to ensure that the Council can deal with human rights situations everywhere and in an appropriate manner and can react to human rights violations wherever they occur;

- Pursuing its commitment to the Council's role of preventing human rights violations, particularly through human rights education and training as well as transitional justice;
- Pursuing dialogue with countries that are not Council members, regional organizations and civil society and improving the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Council.

2. Reaffirm its support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the other United Nations funds, programmes and agencies concerned by

- Continuing its close collaboration and dialogue with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and maintaining its financial support at its current level;
- Promoting a development approach based on human rights in its support for United Nations operational activities and in its commitment within the executive bodies of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Health Organization, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
- Pursuing improved integration of activities related to human rights, transitional justice and the rule of law in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission of the United Nations, particularly within the framework of the country-specific meeting on Burundi, which Switzerland has been chairing since July 2009;
- Contributing to current efforts to reform the treaty monitoring system;
- Continuing to support the updating of the human rights index country by country, which is based on official United Nations documents and constitutes a useful reference and information instrument accessible to all.

3. Promote human rights at the international level by

- Helping States to carry out their human rights obligations through different mechanisms such as human rights dialogues, exchanges of experts, technical cooperation and providing advice;
- Contributing through Swiss development cooperation to the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law, democracy and good governance in partner countries together with both public actors and those in civil society and the private sector;
- Continuing its active contribution to the process of identifying and clarifying the obligations of States, the responsibilities of companies and the channels of appeal in the event of human rights violations by companies;
- Maintaining financial support for Swiss and international non-governmental organizations which contribute to the promotion of human rights and support the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteurs of the Council.

4. Promote human rights at the national level by

- Complying with its human rights obligations at the federal and cantonal levels and promoting awareness of the need to respect human rights among all bodies and actors in society through training, awareness-raising and increased dialogue;
- Implementing the provisions of recently ratified treaties such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and authorizing the Committee against Torture to exercise its prerogatives as stipulated by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture;
- Examining the possibility of ratifying various regional human rights instruments;
- Examining the possibility of ratifying in the near future the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
- Examining the possibility of ratifying the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Cooperating fully with treaty monitoring bodies by submitting its reports regularly and following up the recommendations made by those bodies;
- Cooperating fully with all the Council's special procedures, for which Switzerland addressed a standing invitation in April 2002, and facilitating all arrangements necessary for such visits;
- Including civil society in the implementation of the recommendations made during the universal periodic review.

Internet addresses of official Swiss human rights sites

- Switzerland's human rights priorities:
  http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/f/home/foreign/humsec/humrig.html
- Swiss Human Rights Policy Report (2000):
  http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/ff/2000/2460.pdf
- Switzerland's Human Rights Foreign Policy Report (2003-2007):
  http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/fr/home/doc/publi/phumig/archiv/html
- Peace and Human Rights in Swiss Foreign Policy:
  http://www.eda.admin.ch/etc/medialib/downloads/edazen/doc/publi.Par.0178.File.tmp/EDA%20PA%201V_Bericht%202006_fr.pdf
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Human Rights Policy: For a Life in Dignity:
  http://www.deza.admin.ch/fr/Accueil/Themes/Etat_de_droit_democratie/Droits_humains
- Switzerland and the United Nations:
  http://www.eda.admin.ch/sub_uno/f/uno.html
- State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) — Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):
  http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00645/04008/index.html?lanf=fr